

822.91

C838b i

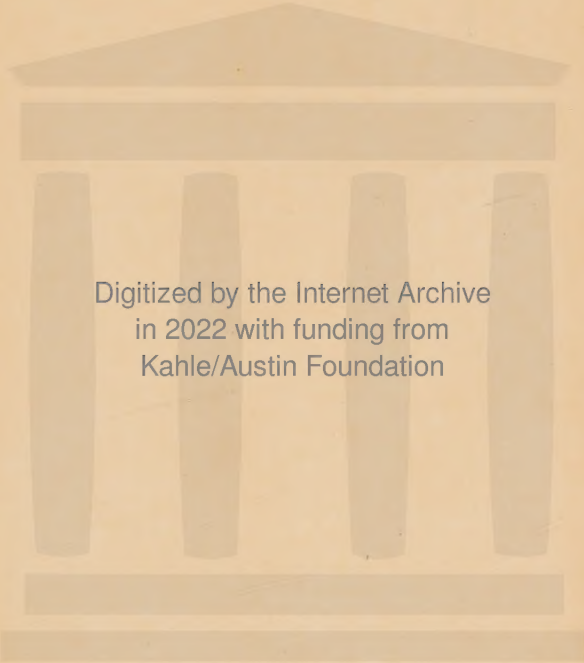
822.91

C838bi

Coward, Noel Pierce

Bitter sweet

106006



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

BITTER SWEET

Uniform with this

HOME CHAT
SIROCCO

BITTER SWEET

by

NOEL COWARD

London

MARTIN SECKER

Number Five John Street Adelphi

1929

Applications regarding performing rights should be
addressed to the author, care of the publishers

Copyright 1929 by Noel Coward
All rights reserved

First Published, August 1929
Reprinted, November 1929

NUMBER FIVE JOHN STREET ADELPHI
LONDON: MARTIN SECKER LTD.

TO
MY VERY DEAR FRIENDS
LYNN FONTANNE
AND
ALFRED LUNT

LIBRARY
WAYNE STATE COLLEGE
WAYNE, NEBRASKA
106006

SH 4-24-68
HS

ACT I

SCENE I

CHARACTERS

THE MARCHIONESS OF SHAYNE

DOLLY CHAMBERLAIN

LORD HENRY JEKYLL

VINCENT HOWARD

NITA

HELEN

JACKIE

FRANK

PARKER

GUESTS, MUSICIANS, etc.

The scene is LADY SHAYNE'S house in Grosvenor Square.

The Year is 1929.

ACT I

SCENE I

The scene is LADY SHAYNE'S house in Grosvenor Square.

There is a small dance in progress. At the back of the stage in the centre are large double doors leading into the supper room. On the left-hand side is a small jazz band which is playing in front of the open windows. On the right-hand side a smaller door opens into the library.

When the curtain rises the stage is crowded with DANCERS and the conversation and laughter combined with the band music should give an effect almost of pandemonium. The music comes to an end with the usual flourish and there is a smattering of applause from the DANCERS. PARKER throws open the double doors at the back and announces supper. Everyone goes in laughing and talking and can be seen taking their places at small tables. The double doors are closed and the members of the band retire on to the balcony for a little fresh air, with the exception of VINCENT HOWARD, who remains at the piano improvising syncopations softly.

DOLLY CHAMBERLAIN and HENRY JEKYLL come in from the library. DOLLY is pretty and attractive, about twenty. HENRY is a trifle older and inclined to be faintly pompous.

DOLLY : They've all gone in to supper—come on.

HENRY : It's damned hot.

DOLLY : You've been grumbling about one thing and another all the evening.

HENRY : Sorry, old darling.

DOLLY : Do you think you love me really ?

HENRY : Of course. Don't be an ass.

DOLLY : Enough ?

HENRY : Enough for what ?

DOLLY : Oh, I don't know—enough to spend your life with me, I suppose.

HENRY : It's a little late to worry about that now—with the wedding next Monday.

VINCENT *strikes a chord with some viciousness.*

DOLLY *looks sharply over her shoulder at him.*

DOLLY : You're right, it is hot.

HENRY : Where's Lady Shayne ?

DOLLY (*pointing to supper room*) : In there, I expect.

HENRY : Strange old girl.

DOLLY : I hope I shall be like that when I'm seventy.

HENRY : She can't be as much as that.

DOLLY : She is—she was at school with my grandmother.

HENRY : Good God !

DOLLY : It must be funny to look back over so many years. I wonder if she minds.

HENRY : Minds what ?

DOLLY : Being old, of course—to have led such a thrilling life and then suddenly to realise there's nothing left to look forward to.

HENRY : Well, she certainly is a gay old bird.

DOLLY : Henry ! (*She looks at him almost shocked.*)

HENRY : What ?

DOLLY : How silly that sounds—A gay old bird.

HENRY : Well, it's true, isn't it ?—That's what she

is, always travelling around and giving parties and staying up all night—it's almost indecent—I wouldn't like to see my grandmother going on like that.

DOLLY : Well, you needn't worry. (*She laughs.*)

HENRY : How do you mean ?

DOLLY : All your relations are too pompous to enjoy anything.

HENRY : Dolly !

DOLLY : Well, they are—they've all got several feet in the grave, there's no life left in them, if ever there was any, which I doubt—you'll probably be like that too in a few years.

HENRY : You think Lady Shayne's life has been thrilling, do you ? (*He smiles superciliously.*) That's funny.

DOLLY : Yes, I do—I do—and it isn't so funny either.

HENRY : Now look here, Dolly, if you knew some of the things about Lady Shayne that I know——

DOLLY : I know more than you know—I know that she justified her existence—she lived for something——

HENRY : She was thoroughly immoral in her youth—lovers and awful second-rate people round her all the time. It was lucky for her she met Shayne and got back.

DOLLY : Got back to what ?

HENRY : Decent people—society.

DOLLY : Oh, dear. I can laugh now.

HENRY : Now Dolly, my girl—I——

DOLLY (*suddenly with vehemence*) : Shut up—shut up—go away from me—you're pompous and silly and I can't bear it——

HENRY : Dolly !

DOLLY (*wildly*) : Go away—go away !

HENRY : You're impossible.

He stamps off into the supper room.

VINCENT : Can I stop playing now ?

DOLLY (*in a stifled voice*) : No—go on.

VINCENT : I can't bear it much longer—darling.

DOLLY : Vincent—don't.

VINCENT : Please come over here and sit close to me.

DOLLY : I'd better not, I think.

VINCENT : Afraid ?

DOLLY : Yes. (*She goes over and sits beside him—he goes on playing.*)

VINCENT. I love you so.

DOLLY : Oh, God ! I'm so utterly, utterly miserable.
(*She buries her head in her arms.*)

VINCENT : Don't cry—you're going to marry a rich man and have rich friends and a rich house and rich food, and some day if you're really rich enough you'll be able to engage me to come and play for you. (*He laughs bitterly.*)

DOLLY : How can you be so horrid !

VINCENT : You'll be safe anyhow.

DOLLY : I don't want to be safe.

VINCENT : Come away with me then—I've got no money—nothing to offer you—you'd look fine singing my songs in some cheap cabaret somewhere—and living in third-rate hotels and just—well, earning your living——

DOLLY : It sounds marvellous.

VINCENT : Don't be a damned fool !

DOLLY : Vincent——

VINCENT : It's hell—— (*He stops playing and goes towards the window.*)

DOLLY : Where are you going ?

VINCENT : To call the boys—we've got to work some more.

DOLLY : I shan't see you again until—until—after I'm married.

VINCENT : Never mind—safety first.

DOLLY : What am I to do ?——

VINCENT : Good-bye, you poor little kid——

He suddenly takes her in his arms and kisses her. She twines her arms round his neck and they stand there clasped tight. LADY SHAYNE enters from the supper room. She watches them silently for a moment. She is seventy years old, but her figure is still slim ; her hair is snow-white, and her gown is exquisite.

LADY S. : Dolly !

DOLLY and VINCENT *break away from one another.*

I come on an errand of peace from your fiancé. If it is inopportune, I apologise.

DOLLY : Oh, Lady Shayne.

LADY S. (*to VINCENT*) : You are the piano player in the band, aren't you ?

VINCENT : I'm the leader of the band.

LADY S. : What a pity ! It's not a very good band.

VINCENT : I'm sorry for what happened just now, your ladyship. It—it was an accident.

LADY S. : In what way—an accident ?

VINCENT : I—er—we were saying good-bye.

LADY S. : Your drummer is too loud, and I can't bear the man who plays the saxophone.

DOLLY : Lady Shayne—I—let me explain.

LADY S. : When a man plays off key the only explanation is that he is a bad musician.

DOLLY : Lady Shayne—I love Vincent and—and he loves me.

LADY S. : And this is Vincent ?

DOLLY : Yes, of course.

LADY S. : And Henry, your future husband, is in there—practically weeping into the cold asparagus.

VINCENT : You're laughing at us—your ladyship.

LADY S. : I laugh at almost everything now—it's only when one is very old indeed that one can see the joke all the way round.

DOLLY : What joke ?

LADY S. : Life and death and happiness and despair and love. (*She laughs again.*)

VINCENT : Don't laugh like that, please—your ladyship.

LADY S. : So you're a musician—an amiable, sensitive-looking young man—and you've been making love to this child—or has she been making love to you?—everything seems to have changed round lately.

VINCENT : It just happened—we—at least that is—I don't know.

LADY S. : Are you a married man ?

VINCENT : No—of course not.

LADY S. : Well, you needn't be so vehement. I merely thought you might have forgotten——

VINCENT : My intentions are quite honourable, if presumptuous.

DOLLY : Are you angry ?

LADY S. : Not in the least, my dear. What do you intend to do ?

DOLLY : I don't know.

LADY S. : Well, if I were you I should make up my mind. (*She turns towards the supper room.*)

DOLLY : You *are* angry.

LADY S. : I detest indecision.

DOLLY : I don't understand——

Several people come out of the supper room, including NITA and HELEN.

NITA : Dolly—what have you been doing to Henry—he's plunged in gloom.

HELEN : He's sending out thought waves of depression and I got the lot, being next to him.

JACKIE rushes out of the supper room with FRANK and several others.

JACKIE : What's happened to the band? Oh, Mr. Howard, play something—play something romantic—I want to dance.

LADY S. (*laughing*) : Yes—play something romantic.

VINCENT (*savagely*) : I'll play anything anybody wants—that's what I'm hired for—— (*He goes to the piano.*) Here's romance for you—how's this——

He plays a swift jazz tune. Everyone begins to dance and jig about. NITA Charlestons a few steps, while HELEN and JACKIE clap their hands and sing. Suddenly LADY SHAYNE stamps her foot sharply.

LADY S. : Stop—stop—it's hideous—you none of you know anything or want anything beyond noise and speed—your dreams of romance are nightmares. Your conception of life grotesque. Come with me a little—I'll show you—listen—listen——

FRANK (*softly*) : Oh God, what's the old girl up to now.

DOLLY : Be quiet.

LADY SHAYNE *begins to sing—everyone squats down on the floor, some of them giggling furtively.* VINCENT and DOLLY stare at her as though transfixed.

“THE CALL OF LIFE.”

LADY S. : Your romance could not live the length
of a day,

You hesitate and analyse,
Betray your love with compromise,
Till glamour fades away ;
And all too soon you realise
That there is nothing left to say.

CHORUS : Hey, hey—hey, hey,
How does she get that way ;
She'd be more light-hearted
If she started—to Charleston ;
She's never danced it,
She's never chanced it ;
Perhaps her muscles are disinclined,
Perhaps she hasn't the strength of mind.

LADY S. : Love that's true can mean naught to you
but a name,

A thing that isn't part of you ;
Can never touch the heart of you ;
It's nothing but a game,
A fire without a flame.

MEN : We find it difficult to grasp your meaning.

LADY S. : Maybe the past is intervening.

CHORUS : We very much regret that times have
changed so,

Life is more speedily arranged so.

LADY S. : In your world of swiftly turning wheels
Life must be extremely grey.

CHORUS : We've no time to waste on Love Ideals,
That which to our senses most appeals
Is all we can obey.

LADY S. : No—no. Not so ;
There must be something further on,
A vision you can count upon,
To help you to acquire
A memory when Youth is gone
Of what was once your heart's desire.

There is a call that echoes sweetly
When it is Spring and Love is in the air ;
Whate'er befall, respond to it completely,
Tho' it may bring you sadness and
despair ;
Fling far behind you
The chains that bind you,
That love may find you
In joy or strife ;
Tho' Fate may cheat you,
And defeat you,
Your Youth must answer to the Call of
Life.

The lights slowly go out, and through the darkness her voice grows sweeter and younger, until presently the lights go up again and disclose a young girl of about seventeen standing demurely in a prim Victorian room with spring sunlight flooding through the windows behind her. Seated beside her at an Erard grand pianoforte is a young MUSIC MASTER—he is playing the piano, but his eyes are gazing up at her face and he is smiling a trifle wistfully as she comes to the end of the song.

ACT I
SCENE II

CHARACTERS

SARAH MILLICK
CARL LINDEN
MRS. MILLICK
HUGH DEVON

The scene is the MILLICK'S house in Belgrave Square.

The Year is 1875.

SCENE II

When SARAH finishes singing, CARL allows his hands to drop from the keys, and still gazing into her eyes, he speaks :

CARL : That was excellent, Miss Sarah—you are improving in a very marked manner.

SARAH (*demurely*) : Thank you.

CARL : I wrote that song for you when I was sixteen years old.

SARAH : But, Mr. Linden, that cannot be true—we have only known each other during the past year.

CARL : I mean that I wrote it for someone like you.

SARAH (*quickly*) : Oh !

CARL : Not a real person—just an ideal in my mind, someone young and charming—holding out her arms as you did just now—expectantly.

SARAH : Expectant of what, Mr. Linden ?

CARL (*hopelessly turning away*) : I don't know.

SARAH : I think it is the loveliest song I ever heard.

CARL (*looking at her again*) : Do you ?

SARAH (*meeting his eyes*) : Yes—of course.

CARL : You took the high note too much at the back of your throat.

SARAH : I'm sorry.

CARL : It doesn't matter.

SARAH : Oh, but, surely it does.

CARL : Nothing matters but just these few moments.

SARAH : Why do you say that, Mr. Linden ?

CARL : Because it's spring, and I—I——

SARAH : Yes ?

CARL : I fear I am talking nonsense.

SARAH (*smiling*) : Perhaps a little.

CARL : We have festivals in the spring in my country—and the young boys and girls dance and their clothes are brightly coloured, glinting in the sun, and the old people sit round under the trees, watching and tapping their sticks on the ground and reviving in their hearts memories of when they, too, were young and in love.

SARAH : In love.

CARL : Yes—as you are in love with your handsome Mr. Devon.

SARAH : Oh—Hugh—yes, of course. Tell me more about your country, Mr. Linden.

CARL : There is nothing to tell really—it seems so very far away—I've almost forgotten.

SARAH : You're homesick though, I can see you are.

CARL : Can you ?

SARAH : Perhaps it's the climate here, it *is* depressing——

CARL : Yes, a little. (*He sings.*)

Tho' there may be beauty in this land of yours,
Skies are very often dull and grey ;
If I could but take that little hand of yours,
Just to lead you secretly away.
We would watch the Danube as it gently flows,
Like a silver ribbon winding free ;
Even as I speak of it my longing grows,
Once again my own dear land to see.
If you could only come with me,
If you could only come with me.

SARAH : Oh, Mr. Linden.

CARL : Yes.

SARAH : How very strange everything is to-day.

CARL : Will you forgive me, Miss Sarah, when I tell you that I shall be unable to play at your wedding reception.

SARAH (*disappointed*) : Oh !

CARL : I must go away on that day—to Brussels.

SARAH : Brussels ?

CARL (*hurriedly*) : Yes, a concert—I have to play at
a concert—it is very important.

SARAH : I understand.

CARL : Do you ?

SARAH : Yes—but it is very, very disappointing.

CARL : But I am deeply grateful for the honour you have done me in asking me.

SARAH (*lightly, but turning away*) : This is the last time we shall meet then for ever so long.

CARL : To-night—I am playing to-night for the dance.

SARAH : But that is different. There will be so many people——

CARL : This is indeed the last time we shall be alone together.

SARAH (*looking down*) : Yes.

CARL : You have been a charming pupil—I shall
always look back on these months with happiness.

SARAH : Happiness ?

CARL : And sadness too.

SARAH : Oh, dear.

CARL : There are tears in your eyes.

SARAH : In yours also.

CARL : I know—I am sorry to be so foolish.

SARAH : Dear Mr. Linden——

She gives him her hand, he kisses it fervently, then pulls himself together with a tremendous effort.

CARL : Once more now—your exercises—just once more through.

SARAH (*tearfully*) : Very well.

CARL strikes a chord—SARAH sings up and down, saying “ Ah.” Suddenly a barrel organ strikes up in the street outside a sugary sentimental melody. SARAH perseveres with her exercises, then CARL begins to sing to her, accompanied by the orchestra, with the barrel organ as a background.

“ I’LL SEE YOU AGAIN.”

CARL : Now Miss Sarah, if you please,
Sing a scale for me.

SARAH : Ah—Ah—Ah——

CARL : Take a breath and then reprise
In a different key.

SARAH : Ah—Ah—Ah——

CARL : All my life I shall remember knowing you,
All the pleasure I have found in showing you
The different ways
That one may phrase
The changing light, and changing shade ;
Happiness that must die,
Melodies that must fly,
Memories that must fade,
Dusty and forgotten by and by.

SARAH : Learning scales will never seem so sweet
again
Till our Destiny shall let us meet again.

CARL : The will of Fate
May come too late.

SARAH : When I'm recalling these hours we've had
Why will the foolish tears
Tremble across the years,
Why shall I feel so sad,
Treasuring the memory of these days
Always ?

CARL : I'll see you again,
Whenever Spring breaks through again ;
Time may lie heavy between,
But what has been
Is past forgetting.

SARAH : This sweet memory,
Across the years will come to me ;
Tho' my world may go awry,
In my heart will ever lie,
Just the echo of a sigh,
Good-bye.

MRS. MILLICK *enters with* HUGH DEVON.
*During the ensuing scene until CARL's exit, the love
theme should be continued in the orchestra very softly.*

MRS. M. . Darling child—your lesson should have
been over a quarter of an hour ago. There is so much
to be done—I declare I'm nearly frantic—Hugh has
been telling me about his aunt—poor Lady Ettleworth,

she developed acute gastritis yesterday evening, and it may mean postponing the wedding, and on the other hand it may not. I'm certain it was the peas she ate at lunch here. They were like bullets. Good afternoon, Mr. Linden.

CARL (*bowing*): Good afternoon, Mrs. Millick.

HUGH: Good afternoon.

CARL (*bowing*): Good afternoon.

HUGH: You look tired, Sarah.

SARAH: I am a little—I—it is quite hot to-day.

MRS. M.: I fear I must hurry you away, Mr. Linden—Sarah has a dressmaker at four-thirty—and there is so much to be done.

CARL: I quite understand.

MRS. M.: Doubtless Sarah will resume her lessons with you when she is settled down in her new home.

SARAH: Mother—I——

MRS. M.: It will be an occupation—I always believe in young married women having an occupation.

CARL: I should have thought being married would be sufficient.

MRS. M. (*slightly scandalised*): Mr. Linden——

CARL (*bitterly*): Your daughter must learn from someone else when she is a young married woman, Mrs. Millick. I shall not be here.

MRS. M.: Well, I'm sure I'm very sorry, I——

CARL (*looking fixedly at SARAH*): I shall be far away in my own country—but each year when spring comes round again, I shall remember you, Miss Sarah, and what a charming pupil you were, and how, although you sometimes sang your top notes from the back of your throat, and your middle notes through your nose, you always sang your deep notes from your heart.

MRS. M. : My dear Mr. Linden !

CARL : This is good-bye, Miss Sarah, except for to-night, when there will be so many people—too many people.

He bows abruptly and goes out. The music swells loudly in the orchestra, the theme of The Call of Life. SARAH begins to sing it brokenly. HUGH advances towards her, but she pushes him away and falls weeping into her mother's arms as the lights fade out.

ACT I

SCENE III

CHARACTERS

SARAH MILLICK
CARL LINDEN
MRS. MILLICK
HUGH DEVON
LADY DEVON
SIR ARTHUR FENCHURCH
VICTORIA
HARRIET
GLORIA
HONOR
JANE
EFFIE
THE MARQUIS OF STEERE
LORD EDGAR JAMES
LORD SORREL
MR. VALE
MR. BETHEL
MR. PROUTIE
FOUR FOOTMEN
GUESTS, MUSICIANS, ETC.

*The scene is the ballroom of the MILLICK's house in
Belgrave Square. The Year is 1875.*

SCENE III

It is the ballroom of the MILLICK's house in Belgrave Square.

There are three windows at the back opening on to a balcony overlooking the Square. On the left at an angle are double doors opening on to the landing and staircase. On the right is a small dais upon which the orchestra is playing, conducted by CARL LINDEN. Below this double doors lead into the supper room and on the left below the big doors is a small door leading into the drawing-room. There are coloured lights festooned over the balcony which look charming against the shadowy trees in the Square.

When the curtain rises, the ball is nearly over. A mazurka is in progress: the dresses of the guests are almost entirely pastel shades with the exception of a few chaperons in black and grey and purple, who are seated on small chairs and sofas below the orchestra. At the end of the mazurka most of the couples leave the floor; some go out on to the balcony, some into the supper room, and some into the drawing-room.

LADY DEVON, *an imposing dowager, meets* MRS. MILLICK *as she billows in from the supper room.*

LADY D.: Charming, Violet—quite delightful—I congratulate you.

MRS. M.: The young people seem very happy, I think.

LADY D. : I thought Sarah looked radiant but a trifle flushed when she was waltzing with Hugh a little while ago.

MRS. M. : She has been flushed all the evening. I hope she isn't feverish—I feel quite disturbed about her.

LADY D. : I feel sure you have no cause to be—she was positively hilarious in the supper room.

MRS. M. : Unnaturally so.

LADY D. : She is in love, my dear.

HUGH *enters from the supper room.*

HUGH (*in harassed tones*). Oh, there you are.

LADY D. (*fondly*) : Happy boy.

HUGH : I am very worried.

MRS. M. : Why—what has happened ?

HUGH : Sarah is behaving in a most peculiar manner—she upset a full glass of claret cup over Sir Arthur Fenchurch and laughed.

MRS. M. : Laughed !

LADY D. : Sir Arthur—Good heavens !

SIR ARTHUR *enters, a pompous-looking old gentleman.*

He is obviously restraining a boiling fury with a great effort. His shirt-front is claret-stained and his manner frigid.

SIR A. (*bowing to MRS. MILLICK furiously, but politely*) : A delightful evening, Mrs. Millick—thank you a thousand times.

MRS. M. : But, Sir Arthur—you mustn't think of going.

SIR A. : I couldn't think of staying—so many fresh young people enjoying themselves so very thoroughly—I feel out of place.

LADY D. : But, Sir Arthur—

SIR A. (*firmly*): Good night, Lady Devon. Good night, Mrs. Millick. (*To HUGH*) My boy—I sincerely *hope* your marriage will be a happy one.

MRS. M.: Well!

HUGH: There now.

LADY D.: How very, very unfortunate.

SARAH enters from the supper room; she looks lovely, but her manner is strained and almost defiant.

SARAH: Has he gone?

MRS. M.: Sarah—I'm ashamed of you.

SARAH: He patted my hand, mamma, then he patted my head. I detest being patted.

HUGH: He's one of the most influential men in London.

MRS. M.: And so kind.

SARAH: And so pompous.

LADY D.: Sarah!

MRS. M.: The first thing to-morrow morning you shall write him a letter of apology.

She moves away with LADY DEVON.

SARAH: To-morrow is so far away. (*She laughs.*)

HUGH: I don't understand you to-night, Sarah.

SARAH: I don't think I quite understand myself.

HUGH: Why did you cry this afternoon in the music room?

SARAH: Are you glad you are going to marry me, Hugh?

HUGH: Why did you cry like that?

SARAH: And will you be kind to me—always?

HUGH: You haven't answered me.

SARAH: And do you love me?

HUGH (*irritably*): Sarah!

SARAH: Do you?

HUGH : Of course I do—what is the matter with you ?

CARL LINDEN *stands up on the orchestra dais where the band have been regaling themselves with refreshments, and very softly plays on the violin* “I’ll See You Again.” SARAH *starts and then begins to laugh hysterically.*

SARAH : Don’t look so solemn, Hugh—I’m in love.

HUGH : My dear girl, that’s all very well——

SARAH : Is it ?

HUGH : But you really must restrain yourself.

SARAH (*almost rudely*) : What a stupid tune, Mr. Linden—so dismal——

HUGH : Sarah !

SARAH (*peremptorily*) : Play something gay, please—immediately.

HUGH (*softly*) : Sarah, you must not speak like that—have you taken leave of your senses ?

SARAH (*vehemently*) : Let me alone—please go away—let me alone !

HUGH *goes angrily on to the balcony.* CARL *strikes up a tremendously gay melody.*

“WHAT IS LOVE ?”

Play something gay for me,
Play for me, play for me ;
Set me free,
I am in a trance to-night,
Can’t you see
How I want to dance to-night ?
Madly my heart is beating,
Some insane melody possessing me,
In my brain thrilling and obsessing me ;

How can I leave it to call in vain ?

Is it joy or pain ?

Live your life, for Time is fleeting,

Some insistent voice repeating ;

Hear me—hear me,

How can I leave it to call in vain ?

Is it joy or pain ?

Refrain.

Tell me—tell me—tell me, what is love ?

Is it some consuming flame ;

Part of the moon, part of the sun,

Part of a dream barely begun ?

When is the moment of breaking-waking ?

Skies change, nothing is the same,

Some strange magic is to blame ;

Voices, that seem to echo round me and above,

Tell me, what is love, love, love ?

Play something gay for me,

Play for me—play for me ;

Tell me why

Spring has so enchanted me ,

Why this shy

Passion has been granted me ;

Am I awake or dreaming ?

Far and near

Every lover follows you,

Swift and clear,

Flying as the swallows do ;

Leave me no longer to call in vain,

Are you joy or pain ?

Leave me not by Love forsaken,
If I sleep, then let me waken ;
Hear me—hear me,
Leave me no longer to call in vain
Are you joy or pain ?

Repeat Refrain.

SARAH *begins to waltz round the stage by herself, and as she passes the supper room, the library and the balcony, GUESTS join her in her dance, until the whole stage is encircled by a wheel of young people laughing and chattering. At the end of this, the band plays "God save the Queen"; everyone naturally stands still, and then the party breaks up. SARAH takes her place at the door with her mother, in order to bid good-bye to the GUESTS. The MUSICIANS are packing up their instruments, and finally all go out, including CARL. HUGH comes in from the balcony. SARAH leaves her mother talking to some GUESTS and runs up to him.*

SARAH : I'm sorry, Hugh.

HUGH (*stiffly*) : It doesn't matter.

SARAH : Oh, but it does—I was unkind and silly.

HUGH : It doesn't matter.

SARAH : Will you please forgive me ?

HUGH : There is nothing to forgive.

SARAH : I shall be bad again if you are so polite.

HUGH : My dear Sarah !

SARAH (*desperately*) : Are you always going to be like this—after we are married, I mean—cold and unbending ?

HUGH : I can only hope you are not often going to behave as you have to-night.

SARAH : Oh, dear.

HUGH : I don't feel that you realise yet the dignity of the position you will hold as my wife.

SARAH : I am not your wife yet.

HUGH : I enjoy being high-spirited as much as anyone.

SARAH : Do you ?

HUGH : But there is a time and place for everything.

SARAH : Then I can look forward to us being very high-spirited when we are alone—when no one is looking—you might wear a funny hat at breakfast.

HUGH : I am very fond of you, my dear, but you must remember I am older than you.

SARAH : Not so very much.

HUGH : And it is part of my profession to consider appearances.

SARAH : Diplomatically speaking.

HUGH : Are you laughing at me ?

SARAH : No, but I'm looking at you—just as though I had never seen you before.

LADY DEVON *enters*.

LADY D. : Hugh, *dear*.

HUGH : Yes, mother ?

LADY D. : I have been waiting for you downstairs. The carriage is at the door. Good night, Sarah.

SARAH : Good night. I have been telling Hugh I was sorry to have behaved so badly.

LADY D. (*smiling*) : I am afraid you're marrying a tomboy, Hugh.

SARAH : No, no—I won't be one any more.

LADY D. : Dear child. (*She kisses her.*) Come, Hugh. (*She moves over to MRS. MILLICK at the door.*)

HUGH : Good night, Sarah.

SARAH : Good night, Hugh.

HUGH : Will you drive with me to-morrow afternoon in Regent's Park ?

SARAH : Thank you—that will be delightful.

HUGH : Until to-morrow—my dear. (*He looks round carefully and then kisses her chastely and departs with LADY DEVON.*)

MRS. M. : Well, that's over. Where are the girls ?

SARAH : Harriet and Gloria ?

MRS. M. : Yes.

SARAH : Sitting out somewhere with Lord Edgar and Mr. Proutie.

MRS. M. : And Effie and Jane and Honor and Victoria ?

SARAH : They're sitting out, too.

MRS. M. : Come with me—we must find them—really you modern young people have no sense of behaviour at all.

She goes with SARAH into the supper room while the music strikes up the introductory bars of a concerted number. HARRIET and LORD EDGAR peep round the library door and tiptoe out on to the stage. GLORIA and MR. PROUTIE do the same from the balcony—EFFIE, JANE, HONOR, VICTORIA, MR. VALE and LORD SORREL, LORD STEERE, MR. BETHEL all join them.

“THE LAST DANCE.”

MEN : They've all gone now—have no fear—

GIRLS : Sarah's mother may be near,
If she should hear

ALL : She might be rather cross with us,
Elderly people make too much fuss.

ACT I

BITTER SWEET

- MEN : Always insist on a chaperone,
Never leave love alone.
- GIRLS : We feel frightened, if you please
Don't flirt or tease.
- MEN : Gentle and sweet in your purity,
We give our hearts as security.
- GIRLS : We shall be scolded a lot for this.
- MEN : You won't miss just one kiss.

They all kiss.

- GIRLS : Think of the consequences, please, you
haven't realised
What an appalling thing for us to be so
compromised,
So dreadfully, dreadfully, dreadfully com-
promised.
- MEN : Everything's ending,
The moon is descending,
Behind the tall trees in the park.
- GIRLS : Silence falls,
Slumber calls.
- MEN : We men together
Were wondering whether
We might have a bit of a lark.
- GIRLS : No jokes in the dark, please,
What sort of a lark, please ?
- ALL : Just a slight dance,
One more dream-of-delight dance ;
Just a sort of good-night dance
Would be glorious fun.
- MEN : Won't you let us, please let us, just stay for
a while,

Won't you, please won't you, be gay for a while ?

All we desire is to play for a while
Now the party's done.

GIRLS : Just a fast waltz,
Till the world seems a vast waltz ;
Very often the last waltz
Is the birth of Romance.

ALL : It's a June night,
There's a thrill in the moonlight ;
Let's give way to the tender surrender
Of our last dance.

At the end of the number all the men, with the exception of Mr. PROUTIE, creep out, leaving the GIRLS seated demurely on gilt chairs at some distance from one another all round the stage. MR. PROUTIE, being very smitten with GLORIA, hides behind the sofa. MRS. MILLICK re-enters, looking rather agitated, followed by SARAH.

MRS. M. : Girls—where have you been ?

HARRIET. Nowhere, Aunt Violet.

MRS. M. : Where is Lord Edgar ?

HONOR : He went hours ago, Mrs. Millick.

MRS. M. : And Lord Steere, Mr. Bethel, Mr. Vale and Lord Sorrel ?

VICTORIA (*sighing*) : All gone.

MRS. M. : And Mr. Proutie ?

GLORIA : He was so tired he left early.

MRS. M. : Come out from behind that sofa, Mr. Proutie.

MR. PROUTIE comes out, looking very sheepish. All the girls giggle. MR. PROUTIE is very young and cherubic.

MR. P. : I—I—fell asleep—I apologise.

MRS. M. : I quite understand.

MR. P. (*appealingly to GLORIA*) : Miss Gloria, I——

MRS. M. : Good night, Mr. Proutie.

MR. P. : Miss Gloria said that——

MRS. M. (*sternly*) : Good *night*, Mr. Proutie.

MR. P. : Er—er—— Good night—thank you for having me—er—good night.

He goes out, covered with embarrassment.

MRS. M. : Gloria—what does this mean ?

GLORIA : Nothing, Aunt Violet.

MRS. M. : If it were not that this was a festive occasion, I should punish you severely for your deceit.

HARRIET : Dear Aunt Violet—don't be cross.

MRS. M. : To bed with the lot of you.

EFFIE : Oh, not yet—just ten minutes more.

MRS. M. : Certainly not—it's nearly one o'clock—fine bridesmaids you'll make on Thursday, if you stay up so late.

HARRIET : Won't you let us stay up just a little longer ?

HONOR : Oh, Mrs. Millick, do—please do.

MRS. M. : No—Sarah's tired——

SARAH : No, I'm not, mother—I know I couldn't sleep for ages.

GLORIA : Just a short while—please !

They all cluster round her and speak at once—finally she breaks away from them.

MRS. M. : Very well—ten minutes then and no more. Sarah, come into my room and say good night.

SARAH : Yes, mother.

MRS. M. : Remember now—in ten minutes time I shall tell Parker to come and put out the lights—and don't make too much noise——

HARRIET : We won't, we promise.

GLORIA : Good night, Aunt Violet.

MRS. MILLICK *goes out amid a chorus of "Good nights."* *The moment the door has closed upon her the girls fling aside their demure manner and dance about the stage. HARRIET jumps on to the orchestra dais and begins to strum the piano. EFFIE, HONOR and SARAH sing gaily while VICTORIA and JANE dance.*

HONOR : Oh, Sarah—I do envy you—being married and going to Paris and everything.

SARAH : Do you ?

EFFIE : Aren't you dying of excitement ?—I know I should be.

SARAH : No, not exactly—I feel strange somehow.

GLORIA : What sort of strange ?

SARAH : I don't know—it's difficult to explain—perhaps I'm frightened.

JANE : Nobody could be frightened of Hugh.

VICTORIA : When I marry, it must be somebody just like Hugh.

HARRIET : I shall choose someone taller—more robust, you know.

EFFIE : How can you, Harriet—Hugh's just the right size.

GLORIA : I shall marry Mr. Proutie.

ALL : Gloria !—What do you mean ?

GLORIA (*calmly*) : He adores me.

JANE : Has he asked you ?

GLORIA : Of course.

HONOR : And you said yes ?

GLORIA : I said no. But that doesn't matter—he'll ask me again.

EFFIE : Are you in love with him ?

GLORIA : No—not a bit.

HONOR : How *can* you, Gloria ?

GLORIA : I'd much rather marry someone I didn't love really.

ALL : "Gloria !" "Really !" "You're dreadful !" "Why ?" etc.

GLORIA : Because I could manage him better.

HARRIET : I agree with Gloria.

VICTORIA : So do I.

SARAH : I don't—I want love.

EFFIE (*giggling*) : So do I—but you'll get it before I do——

They all laugh.

HONOR : I mean to have a lot of babies——

JANE : I want someone to protect me always—someone strong that I can look up to——

HARRIET : Fiddlesticks !

VICTORIA : Rubbish !

GLORIA : Old-fashioned nonsense !

JANE : Let's play a game.

SARAH : What game ?

EFFIE : Yes, yes—any game.

HONOR : Postman's knock.

SARAH : No—no—that means one of us going out——

JANE : How, when and where.

EFFIE : So does that.

SARAH : Let's play an exciting game—a noisy game.

HARRIET : Aunt Violet will hear.

SARAH : No—she's two floors up.

GLORIA : Blind Man's Buff.

EFFIE : Yes—yes.

SARAH : That will do——

VICTORIA : Who'll be it——

JANE : Eeny meeny miny mo—we must do eeny meeny miny mo——

FINALE.

GLORIA : Eeny meeny miny mo

HARRIET : Catch a nigger by his toe

VICTORIA : If he hollers let him go

ALL : O.U.T. spells out and so

GLORIA : Out goes she. (*She points to EFFIE.*)

EFFIE : Out goes me. (*Skippping about.*) This
is the loveliest, loveliest part of the
party.

GLORIA : Eeny meeny miny mo

HARRIET : Catch a nigger by his toe

VICTORIA : If he hollers let him go

ALL : O.U.T. spells out and so

GLORIA : Out goes she. (*She points to HARRIET.*)

HARRIET : Out goes me.

She and EFFIE take hands and twirl around.

HARRIET : } Now we're free who knows who'll be
EFFIE : } he !

GLORIA : Eeny meeny miny mo

VICTORIA : Catch a nigger by his toe

SARAH : If he hollers let him go

ALL : O.U.T. spells out and so

VICTORIA : Out goes she. (*She points to GLORIA.*)

GLORIA : Out goes me. (*She joins EFFIE and
HARRIET.*)

HARRIET : }
 EFFIE : } This is the loviest, loveliest part of the
 GLORIA : } party.

VICTORIA : Eeny meeny miny mo

SARAH : Catch a nigger by his toe

JANE : If he hollers let him go

JANE : Out goes she. (*Points to VICTORIA.*)

VICTORIA : Out goes me. (*She joins EFFIE, HARRIET and GLORIA.*)

ALL : This is the loveliest, loveliest part of the party.

EFFIE : } Only three of them left now we're

HARRIET : } excited to see

GLORIA : } Who is going to be blind man, who's it

VICTORIA : } going to be.

SARAH : I have a strange presentiment it's me.

JANE : Eeny meeny miny mo

Out goes she. (*She points to HONOR, who joins the others.*)

SARAH : Eeny meeny mo

Out goes she. (*She points to JANE.*)

I'm HE—it's me

It's me—I'm HE

GIRLS : Just get a handkerchief and bind it around her eyes,

SARAH : Not too tight, not too tight.

They blindfold her.

GIRLS : She mustn't see a thing no matter how much she tries.

SARAH : That's all right—that's all right.

GIRLS : She will cheat if she can,
 That corner's raised a bit,

Turn her round till she's dazed a bit,
Are you ready now,
One, two, three !

SARAH : Since the party began,
Something's been taunting me,
Some presentiment haunting me,
What can it be ?

GIRLS : Start now—start now,
She can see the ground,
She can see the ground.

SARAH : Somehow, somehow,
Some forgotten sound,
Some forgotten sound,
Echoes deep in my heart,
Strangely enthralling me,
Someone secretly calling me,
Like a melody far away.

GIRLS : Oh, for Heaven's sake start,
Here go along with you,
We can see nothing wrong with you,
We want to play.

They all dance about and dodge her. The door on the right opens quietly and CARL LINDEN comes into the room. He moves across to the piano and collects his music and is on his way out when SARAH clasps him round the neck. All the GIRLS laugh. CARL is staggered for a moment, drops his music, and then completely losing all restraint kisses her on the mouth. She snatches the bandage from her eyes and stares into his face. All the other GIRLS are watching aghast.

SARAH (*softly*) : It's you I love—now and always.

She kisses him, then draws back and they stand there staring at one another oblivious of everything. EFFIE giggles suddenly and then stops herself.

HARRIET : Sarah——

GLORIA : Sarah—don't be silly—Sarah——

Neither CARL nor SARAH turn their heads.

CARL : Come with me——

SARAH : Now ?

CARL : Yes—now—to-night.

SARAH : I'll come with you—wherever you want me to.

CARL : I love you—do you hear—I've loved you for months—for years really—ever since I was a boy I've known you were waiting for me somewhere—I'll take care of you—live for you—die for you.

SARAH : Don't say that, my darling. (*Singing*)

Should happiness forsake me,
And disillusion break me,
Come what may,
Lead the way,
Take me, take me.
Although I may discover,
Love crucifies the lover,
Whate'er Fate has in store,
My heart is yours for evermore.

CARL (*singing*) :

Oh Lady, you are far above me,
And yet you whisper that you love me,
Can this be true or is it just some foolish
dream ?

SARAH (*speaking*): You know it's true, look in my eyes—can't you see?

CARL (*speaking softly*): Oh, my dear, dear love.
(*Singing*)

Now tho' your fears are sleeping,
Look well before the leaping.
Love of me
May be repaid
By weeping.
Life can be bitter learning,
When there is no returning,
Whate'er Fate has in store,
My heart is yours for evermore,
I love you—I love you—I love you.

GLORIA: You cannot realise the things you say:
You quite forget yourself, please go
away.

HARRIET: Now leave this all to me, my dear,
It's really too absurd.

EFFIE: It's quite the most romantic thing that I have
ever heard!

VICTORIA (*speaking*): Effie, be quiet.

SARAH *kisses him again full on the mouth.*

HARRIET *rushes up and drags them apart.*

HARRIET: Sarah—are you mad?—Mr. Linden,
please go at once.

CARL (*smiling*): How can I go?

GLORIA: Harriet—leave this to me——

SARAH: Stop—don't say another word.

EFFIE (*rushing up hysterically*): It's the most wonder-
fully thrilling thing that ever happened in the world.

HARRIET : Don't be an idiot, Effie.

SARAH (*quietly*) : Effie's right, Harriet.

HARRIET : I'm going straight upstairs to fetch Aunt Violet.

EFFIE (*struggling with her*) : You shan't ! You shan't !—They love each other—look at them—Honor, Victoria, Jane, help me !

HONOR, VICTORIA and JANE *come to her assistance.*

SARAH AND CARL (*singing*) :

I'll see you again,
Whenever Spring breaks through again,
Always I'll be by your side,
No time or tide
Can part us ever——

VICTORIA : Shhh ! Someone's coming—hide—quickly——

They all hide behind sofas and chairs.

FOUR FOOTMEN *enter pompously to music.*

FOOTMEN QUARTETTE.

Now the party's really ended,
And our betters have ascended,
All with throbbing heads,
To their welcome beds,
Pity us, who have to be up,
Sadly clearing the debris up,
Getting for our pains,
Most of the remains.
Though the Major-Domo is a trifle tight,
Though the mistress hiccuped when she said
good night,

We in our secluded garret,
Mean to finish up the claret-
Cup all right.
When we've doused the final candles,
We'll discuss the latest scandals
We have overheard,
Pleasure long deferred.
When the Duke of So and So stares
At his wife, we know below stairs,
While she smirks and struts,
That he hates her guts.
Though we all disguise our feelings pretty well,
What we mean by "Very good" is "Go to hell."
Though they're all so grand and pompous,
Most of them are now non compos,
Serve them right,
Good night.

They extinguish all the lights and close the windows and go out, closing the doors behind them. All the GIRLS come out, and lastly CARL and SARAH. SARAH goes up to HARRIET. GLORIA lights two candles.

SARAH: Harriet—whatever you do won't be the slightest use—I love Carl—I'm going with him—I don't care where or how—but this is my life, you understand—my whole life—so help me—all you can—please—please—

HARRIET: Think of Hugh—you're mad.

SARAH: Perhaps I am mad, but I'm happy—can't you see—I'm really happy—

HARRIET: Mr. Linden, I appeal to you.

GLORIA: It's no use, Harriet.

HARRIET: I feel as if I were in a dream.

CARL : You are.

HARRIET : What are your prospects—have you any money ?

CARL : None—no money—but I can earn enough.

SARAH : So can I—I'll sing——

VICTORIA : Sarah !

CARL : Yes—Sarah will sing and I will play and we will make a living—come, Sarah.

SARAH : Like this ?

EFFIE : Quickly, Jane—your bedroom is nearest—your hat and cape.

JANE and EFFIE fly out of the room. “*The Call of Life*” theme plays softly. SARAH runs up to the windows and flings them open, singing. CARL joins her.

SARAH AND CARL (*singing*)

Fling far behind you
The chains that bind you,
That Love may find you
In joy or strife ;
Tho' Fate may cheat you,
And defeat you,
Your youth must answer to the Call of Life.

EFFIE and JANE return with a hat and cape. They dress her in them, and she and CARL go out together. As the orchestra crashes out the final chords, the OTHERS rush to the balcony to wave.

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE I

CHARACTERS

SARI LINDEN

CARL LINDEN

MANON (LA CREVETTE)

LOTTE

FREDA

HANSI

GUSSI

CAPTAIN AUGUST LUTTE

HERR SCHLICK

WAITERS, CLEANERS, ORCHESTRA, ETC.

The scene is HERR SCHLICK's café in Vienna.

The Year is 1880.

ACT II

SCENE I

The scene is the interior of "SCHLICK's" café in Vienna, It is about 12 o'clock noon, and WAITERS in shirt sleeves are tidying up the tables and polishing brasses. There are also some cleaners and charwomen swabbing the floor. CARL, in shirt sleeves, is rehearsing with the Orchestra on the orchestra platform at the back. LOTTE, HANSI, and FREDa, three ladies of the town, elaborately dressed, are seated at a table down stage left.

The OPENING CHORUS is sung in snatches by the WAITERS, CLEANERS, etc.

WAITERS : Life in the morning isn't too bright,
When you've had to hurry round and
carry plates all night ;
And the evening isn't too gay,
When you know you've got to rise
and be at work all day.
This café merely caters
For a horde of drunken satyrs,
Why, oh why, we're waiters nobody
can say.

CLEANERS : Oh dear, it's clear to see that cleaners
lead a worse life,
Every day we curse life ;

More and more
The muscles on our brawny arms like
iron bands are
Scrubbing till our hands are sore ;
We scour and polish till our fingers
ache.

WAITERS (*humming*) : Hum—hum—— !

CLEANERS : Each hour we feel as tho' our backs
would break,

WAITERS : Hum—hum !

CLEANERS : We weep and keep our growing
families as well,

Why we're here at all nobody can tell.

WAITERS : Life in the morning isn't too bright,
When you've had to hurry round and
carry plates all night.

CLEANERS : Oh dear, it's clear to see that cleaners
lead a worse life.

WAITERS : And the evening isn't too gay,
When you know you've got to rise and
be at work all day.

CLEANERS : You see the reason why each day we
want to curse life.

WAITERS : For this café merely caters

CLEANERS : Weary

WAITERS : For a horde of drunken satyrs ;

CLEANERS : Dreary

WAITERS : Why, oh why, we're waiters nobody
can say.

CLEANERS : Every day.

WAITERS : Ah—Ah—Ah——

CLEANERS : Ah—Ah—Ah——

At the end of it, CARL rests his orchestra for a moment.

LOTTE : He left me at half-past ten, my dear, he kissed my hand, à la grand chevalier, which made me laugh, I *must* say.

FREDA : Is that all he left you with—a kiss ?

LOTTE : Don't be vulgar, Freda, everything was arranged last night in his carriage—we drove round and round the Ringstrasse.

HANSI : I hope it didn't make you too giddy, dear.

LOTTE : You none of you understand, this is an “*affaire de cœur*,” I'm sure of it.

FRITZ, a waiter, brings LOTTE a bill for the coffee and brioches they have been having.

LOTTE : It's not my turn—Hansi ?

HANSI : I paid yesterday.

LOTTE : Come along, Freda—no fumbling.

FREDA : I wasn't fumbling—I was just trying to count up how many times I've paid during the last month.

HANSI : That oughtn't to take you long.

FREDA (*rather crossly*) : Oh, here you are, then. (*She gives him some money.*)

He nods and goes off.

LOTTE : Where was I ?

FREDA : Driving round the Ringstrasse, my dear, talking business.

LOTTE : You can all jeer if you like, but just you wait and see. Anyhow, I feel positively exhausted, having had to get up so early.

HANSI : I'm tired too.

GUSSI enters, elaborately dressed and wearing a fur tippet and muff.

GUSSI : Hallo, girls.

FREDA : Oh, my God, look at Gussi.

HANSI (*fingering the tippet*) : Where did you get it ?

GUSSI : Here, leave off, surely you've seen a bit of mink before ?

HANSI : Not on you.

GUSSI : Well, have a good look now and enjoy it.

LOTTE : Who gave it to you ?

GUSSI (*with great coyness*) : I hardly like to tell you, it was such a delightful surprise—I had been spending the night with my dear old grandmother——

HANSI : I hope she took her spurs off.

They all laugh. GUSSI sits down at the table.

LOTTE : Do you want some coffee ?

GUSSI : No thanks, it would spoil my lunch.

FREDA : I'm lunching at Sacher's—I can bring a friend—Hansi ?

HANSI : No thank you, dear.

FREDA : Lotte ?

LOTTE : Who are you lunching with, the old ostrich ?

FREDA : No, he's gone to Warsaw. This is a banker—quite young, but common, no use for dinner—do you want to come ?

LOTTE : I don't mind.

HANSI : I can't imagine, Freda, why you waste your time with small fry.

FREDA : I don't consider any free meal small fry.

LOTTE, FREDA and HANSI sing a trio :

“LADIES OF THE TOWN.”

Though we're often accused of excessively plastic,
drastic sins,
When we're asked to decide on the wrong or the
right life,
Night life wins,
We know that destiny will never bring
A wedding ring about.
Our moral sense may really not be quite the thing
To fling about, sing about ;
We'll achieve independence before it's too late, and
Wait and see.
What care, what care we ?

Refrain

Ladies of the town,
Ladies of the town,
Though we've not a confessional air,
We have quite a professional flair,
Strolling up and down, strolling up and down,
We employ quite an amiable system
Of achieving renown,
Though the church and state abuses us,
For as long as it amuses us,
We'll remain, no matter how they frown,
Naughty, naughty, ladies of the town.

We can often behave in a very disarming, charming
way,
Which can frequently add to the money we lay by,
Day by day.

If we are told of something on the Stock Exchange,
We pry a bit,
And if it's safe we get some kindly banker
To supply a bit, buy a bit,
And if later our helpers may wish to forget us,
Set us free,
What care, what care we ?

Refrain

Ladies of the town, ladies of the town,
Though we're socially under a cloud,
Please forgive us for laughing aloud,
Strolling up and down, strolling up and down,
Disapproval may sometimes submerge us,
But we none of us drown,
We have known in great variety
Members of the best society,
And should we decide to settle down,
We'll be wealthy ladies of the town.

*When LOTTE, FREDa and HANSI have gone off
CARL addresses his orchestra on the dais.*

CARL: It is lacking in colour. Strings, when you take the theme in the first refrain, bring it out, let it live and breathe, and mean something. In the last four bars I've marked a *rallentando*—Now then——

He raises his baton and the orchestra begins La Crevette's Song—as the music swells MANON enters briskly. She is, naturally, in day clothes and a hat; she listens for a moment, and then stamps her foot. CARL stops the orchestra.

MANON: No, Carl—it must be quicker there.

CARL : When we were working yesterday that was the exact spot you wanted it slower.

MANON : Listen—it starts so—— (*She sings*) “Lorsque j’étais petite fille en marchant parmi les prés”—swift, staccato like that, then “J’entendis la voix d’ma tante, qui murmura à côté”—just a leetle slower—not much, you understand——

CARL : Very well. (*He starts the music again.*)

MANON *stops him.*

MANON : No, no, no—you are so stubborn.

CARL : Stubborn?

MANON : Yes—you are a musician, yes, but you know nothing about singers, especially when they have no voice like me.

CARL (*coming down to her*) : You have a beautiful voice, Manon.

MANON (*laughing suddenly*) : Now you are being earnest and sincere, it is so many years since I saw that solemn look in your eyes——

CARL : You can’t expect me to pay you compliments often, when you try to quarrel with me all the time.

MANON : I quarrel ! Don’t be a fool.

CARL (*turning away*) : It’s you who are a fool——

MANON (*touching his arm, softly*) : No, Carl—I was once—but I’m not any more.

CARL : What do you mean?

MANON : Where is Sari—your little English Sarah?

CARL : She will be here soon.

MANON (*mockingly*) : How exciting !

CARL : You do hate her, don’t you?

MANON (*gaily*) : Passionately—I should like to scratch her eyes out and pull her nose off and wring her neck——

CARL : Manon !

MANON : ——in a friendly way. (*She laughs again.*)

CARL : Don't laugh like that.

MANON : You used to love my laughter—it was so gay and charming, you said—I think you mentioned once that it reminded you of a bird chirruping, that was a very pretty thought, Carl——

CARL : Please go away now—I must continue my rehearsal.

MANON : Carl——

CARL : Yes.

MANON : I'm only teasing you and irritating you because I'm jealous——

CARL : But, Manon——

MANON (*holding up her hand*) : No, don't protest and say I have no right to be jealous ! I know that well—ours was such a silly little affair really, and so long ago, but somehow it was very sweet and it left a small sting behind——

CARL : It was your fault that it ended.

MANON : I know that too—and I'm glad—I was very proud of myself finishing it all suddenly like that—because it was for the best—I'm no good for you really—not faithful enough, and you should be free always, because you're an artist. (*She turns away.*) But now you'll never be free, so my beautiful little sacrifice was all in vain. (*She laughs.*) Go back to your work—I'll run through my words here——

CARL : Manon—I——

MANON : Please—play my music for me—I'm not sure of it yet—I'm not sure of anything.

CARL *looks at her silently for a moment, and then goes thoughtfully back to the orchestra.* MANON *calls*

FRITZ *and orders herself a drink. He brings it immediately and she sings her song quietly.*

“IF LOVE WERE ALL.”

Life is very rough and tumble,
For a humble
Disease,
One can betray one's troubles never,
Whatever
Occurs,
Night after night,
Have to look bright,
Whether you're well or ill
People must laugh their fill.
You mustn't sleep
Till dawn comes creeping.
Though I never really grumble
Life's a jumble.
Indeed——
And in my efforts to succeed
I've had to formulate a creed——

Refrain.

I believe in doing what I can,
In crying when I must,
In laughing when I choose.
Heigho, if love were all
I should be lonely.
I believe the more you love a man,
The more you give your trust,
The more you're bound to lose.
Although when shadows fall

I think if only——
Somebody splendid really needed me,
Someone affectionate and dear,
Cares would be ended if I knew that he
Wanted to have me near.
But I believe that since my life began
The most I've had is just
A talent to amuse.
Heigho, if love were all !

Tho' life buffets me obscenely,
It serenely
Goes on.
Although I question its conclusion,
Illusion
Is gone.
Frequently I
Put a bit by
Safe for a rainy day.
Nobody here can say
To what, indeed,
The years are leading.
Fate may often treat me meanly,
But I keenly
Pursue
A little mirage in the blue.
Determination helps me through.

Repeat Refrain.

MANON goes off after song. CARL, at the end of
MANON'S song, dismisses the orchestra, who go off.
He comes down from the dais, putting on his coat, when
GUSSI enters.

GUSI : Hallo, Carl.

CARL (*absently*) : Hallo.

GUSI : Like a drink ?

CARL : No, thanks.

GUSI : Are you lunching with anyone ?

CARL : Yes, my wife.

GUSI : I might have known it. (*She slips her arm through his.*) Let me know when you feel like being unfaithful to her, won't you ?

CARL (*smiling*) : You're bad, Gussie, thoroughly bad—go along with you.

GUSI : Here listen, you know that dark red coat of mine ?

CARL : Yes.

GUSI : Would your Sari like it ? I've had this given to me. (*She waves her muff.*) I shan't need it any more.

CARL : It's very, very sweet of you, Gussi.

GUSI : You both look so pinched—it depresses me to look at you—bring Sarah along to lunch at my flat——

CARL : Very well.

CAPTAIN AUGUST LUTTE *enters*. CAPTAIN AUGUST *is a debonair, imposing-looking man.*

GUSI : Just a moment, some good news has come in—come at 1.30, if I'm not back tell Liza to serve you.

CARL : But, Gussi——

GUSI (*firmly*) : Good bye, dear Carl——

CARL *goes off laughing*. GUSI *sidles up to*

CAPTAIN AUGUST.

GUSI : Good morning.

CAPTAIN (*bowing stiffly*) : Good morning.

GUSI : Can I do anything for you ?

CAPTAIN : I wish to see Herr Schlick.

GUSSI (*grimacing*) : How nice.

CAPTAIN (*abruptly*) : You are very pretty.

GUSSI (*shrinking away*) : Oh, Captain—my salts—my salts.

CAPTAIN : Perhaps you will make a rendezvous with me for next week ?

GUSSI : I may be dead next week, what's the matter with now ?

CAPTAIN : I fear that I am otherwise engaged.

HERR SCHLICK *enters, oily and ingratiating.*

HERR S. : Captain—forgive me please—I—— (*Sees GUSSI.*) What are you doing here ?

GUSSI : Just feeding the swans—— Good-bye.

She goes off.

CAPTAIN : Herr Schlick, I have a complaint to make.

HERR S. : It shall be rectified—before you say it, whatever is wrong is rectified.

CAPTAIN : Among your professional dancing partners you have been careless enough to engage an iceberg.

HERR S. : Good God !

CAPTAIN : A beautiful, alluring, unsociable iceberg—her name is Sari.

HERR S. : She is new, Captain ; she has only been here a few weeks.

CAPTAIN : Even a few weeks is surely time enough to enable her to melt sufficiently to sup with me——

HERR S. : She is English, Captain, one must make allowances.

CAPTAIN : I do not come to a café of this sort to make allowances—I come to amuse myself and to pay for it.

MANON *re-enters on the dais just above them. She is looking for CARL, but stops on hearing their voices.*

HERR S. (*very flurried*): Captain—I assure you—anything that you wish—I will arrange as soon as possible,

CAPTAIN: I wish for this Sari, to sup with me—to-night.

HERR S.: She shall, Captain, she shall.

CAPTAIN: You will please have a special supper laid ready in a quiet room—No. 7 is the best, I think——

HERR S.: You are sure that you would not rather have Lotte or perhaps Hansi——

CAPTAIN: Quite sure.

HERR S.: You see this English girl is the wife of my orchestra leader—they are said to be in love—it will be a little difficult——

CAPTAIN (*rising*): I hope I have made myself quite clear——

HERR S.: But, Captain——

CAPTAIN: You will please arrange things as I have suggested—to-night I wish no allowances to be made.

He bows as he is about to go out, meets SARI coming in. She has grown more poised and mature during the years spent with CARL. She starts visibly on seeing CAPTAIN AUGUST—he clicks his heels and bows.

Good morning.

SARI: Good morning.

CAPTAIN: It is a beautiful morning.

SARI: Beautiful.

CAPTAIN: But chilly.

SARI: It is very warm out.

CAPTAIN : Would you honour me by lunching with me ?

SARI : I'm so sorry, but I am already engaged.

CAPTAIN : Perhaps a drive a little later on ; we might go up to Cobenzil——

SARI : Please forgive me, but to-day it is impossible.

CAPTAIN : I quite understand. (*He bows again.*)
Until to-night, madame.

He goes off.

HERR S. (*furiously*) : It may interest you to know that you are losing me one of my most valued clients—I'll deal with you later. Captain—a moment, please—Captain——

He rushes off. SARI looks after him pensively for a moment and then sighs. MANON comes down from the dais.

MANON : Sari.

SARI : Oh !

MANON : Don't look so startled——

SARI : I came to find Carl. Have you seen him ?

MANON : Yes, I've just been rehearsing with him.

SARI : Oh !

MANON : He's about somewhere.

SARI : I'll find him. (*She turns to go.*)

MANON : I want to speak to you.

SARI (*coldly*) : Yes ? What is it ?

MANON : Oh, why do you always look at me like that ?

SARI : Like what ?

MANON : Aloof and superior.

SARI : I wasn't conscious of being either of those things.

MANON : Yes, you were—you know you were—you

always are with me, But, listen, never mind about that now—I heard Schlick arranging for you to have supper in a private room with Captain August to-night.

SARI : What !

MANON : So be careful.

SARI (*incredulously*) : You heard Schlick arranging for *me*——

MANON : Yes—yes, yes—I thought you might like to know.

SARI : How horrible !

MANON : Not so horrible as all that ; lots of the girls here would be glad of the chance, but as Carl is in love with you and you are apparently in love with him, I thought——

SARI (*rather stiffly*) : Thank you, Manon.

MANON : Not at all. (*She turns to go.*)

SARI : Manon——

MANON (*stopping*) : Yes ?

SARI : I'm sorry.

MANON : What for ?

SARI : If my manner is—well, unkind——

MANON (*patting her arm*) : All is well, my dear—I don't love him any more, really, at least I don't think I do, and anyhow you have no reason to be jealous, nothing to be afraid of. Look at me, and then look in the glass. (*She kisses her lightly, and goes off humming a reprise of her former song.*)

CARL *enters from left.*

SARI : Carl.

CARL : Darling ! (*He kisses her fondly.*) How quick you've been dressing. I crept out without waking you.

SARI : Yes, I know ; you must never do that again.

CARL : Why—what's the matter ?

SARI : I dreamt—something dreadful. I awoke terrified—I came straight here without any coffee or anything—to see if you were safe.

CARL : I safe ? Why, of course I'm safe—why shouldn't I be ?

SARI : I don't know, I'm frightened. I hate this place—let's go away. I'd rather go back to singing in the streets again, at least we were independent then and together.

CARL : We're together now—always.

SARI (*wildly*) : No, no—not here we're not—we're separated by hundreds of things and people—you're the chef d'orchestre and I'm a professional dance partner. I hate it, I tell you—I can't be gay and enjoy it like the other girls, because I love you—I can't feel happy when the cavalry officers put their arms round my waist and dance and flirt with me, because I love you, and because I'm scared.

CARL : Why are you scared ?

SARI : Something horrible will happen if we stay here. I know it, I feel it——

CARL : Come along and have a little lunch, then you'll feel better. We're going to Gussi's flat—she's got a present for you—you know that red coat——

SARI : Oh, Carl, Carl, you won't understand !——

CARL *takes her in his arms.*

CARL : You must take hold of your courage, my sweet—we must both put up with things now in order to be secure later on—no more street singing—it broke my heart to see you hungry—that's all past—you've been so splendid and brave all through—just hold on for

a few weeks more until we have enough to start that little café——

SARI (*hysterically*): Laugh at me then—laugh everything away, stop me being solemn—we're both too young to be dreary and sentimental—make me forget the present in planning for the future—where will our café be? How shall we manage it? Shall I be able to sing your songs there?—one day I might make them famous—I love your music so very much—I want it to be known all over the world, and one day it will be, I'm sure of it—do you think I could help—do you?

CARL (*kissing her*): Darling.

“LITTLE CAFE.”

CARL: We share a mutual ambition

Which naught can disarrange,

SARI: Based on the hopeful supposition

That soon our luck will change.

CARL: Tho' we very often wonder whether

Poverty will win the day,

SARI: Just as long as we remain together

Troubles seem to fade away.

BOTH: However hard the bed one lies on

The same old dreams begin,

We're always scanning the horizon

For when our ship comes in.

Refrain.

CARL: We'll have a sweet little café

In a neat little square,

SARI: We'll find our fortune

And our happiness there.

CARL : We shall thrive on the vain and resplendent

SARI : And contrive to remain independent.

CARL : We'll have a meek reputation
And a chic clientele.

SARI : Kings will fall under our spell.

BOTH : We'll be so zealous
That the world will be jealous
Of our sweet little café in our square.

SARI : Can you imagine our sensations
When we've security ?

CARL : And all our dreary deprivations
Are just a memory.

SARI : Tho' we're very often driven frantic,
Peace is very hard to find.

CARL : All these dreadful days will seem romantic
When we've left them far behind.

BOTH : Fate needn't be quite such a dragon,
He knows how tired we are.
We'll hitch our hopeful little wagon
On to a lucky star.

Refrain.

CARL : We'll have a sweet little café
In a neat little square,

SARI : We'll find our fortune
And our happiness there.

CARL : We shall thrive on the vain and resplendent

SARI : And contrive to remain independent.

CARL : We'll have a meek reputation
And a chic clientele.

SARI : Kings will fall under our spell.

ACT II

BITTER SWEET

BOTH : We'll be so zealous
That the world will be jealous
Of our sweet little cafe in our square.

*At the end of the last refrain CARL takes SARI in
his arms and the curtain falls.*

ACT II

SCENE II

CHARACTERS

SARI LINDEN

CARL LINDEN

MANON (LA CREVETTE)

CAPTAIN AUGUST LUTTE

LIEUTENANT TRANISCH

HERR SCHLICK

LOTTE

FREDA

HANSI

GUSSI

SIX SPECIAL DANCERS

OFFICERS, GUESTS, WAITERS, MUSICIANS, ETC.

The scene is the same as ACT II, SCENE I.

ACT II

SCENE II

The scene is the same, except that the atmosphere has changed from a frowsy daylight squalor to a tinselled gas-light gaiety.

It is about 2 a.m.

When the curtain rises everyone is waltzing. CARL is conducting the orchestra on the dais. Some of the GIRLS have MALE PARTNERS and some are dancing with one another. The stage should look as hot and crowded as possible. At the end of the opening waltz CARL stops his orchestra and the theatre orchestra takes up the OFFICERS' entrance music. About a dozen smart OFFICERS come marching on in attractive undress uniform. They sing a concerted introductory number with the GIRLS.

OFFICERS' CHORUS.

OFFICERS : We wish to order wine, please,
Expressly from the Rhine, please,
The year we really don't much care.

LADIES : Oh dear,
Now that you're here
Think of the wear and tear.

OFFICERS : We hope without insistence
To overcome resistance
In all you little ladies fair,

- LADIES : Oh well,
How can we tell
Whether you'd really dare ?
- OFFICERS : We sincerely hope it's really not a
thankless task
Amusing us,
Won't you please agree ?
- LADIES : Ah, me !
- OFFICERS : You could quickly break our hearts by
everything we ask
Refusing us ;
Cruel that would be
Ladies, can't you see !
We're officers and gentlemen,
Reliable and true,
Considerate and chivalrous
In everything we do.
- Though we're gay and drunk a trifle,
All our laughter we should stifle,
Were we summoned by a bugle call.
We're amorous and passionate,
But dignified and stern,
Which if you play us false you'll
quickly learn.
Do not let our presence grieve you,
When we've loved you we shall leave
you,
For we're officers and gentlemen, that's
all !

*After song, CAPTAIN AUGUST and TRANISCH enter,
and CAPTAIN AUGUST and the OFFICERS sing
" Tokay," of which everyone joins in the last Refrain.*

“ TOKAY.”

OFFICERS : Tokay !

CAPTAIN A. : When we're thoroughly wined and
dined,
And the barracks are left behind,
We come down to the town to find
Some relief from the daily grind.
Love is kind,
Love is blind.

OFFICERS : Tokay !

CAPTAIN A. : When the thoughts of a man incline
To the grapes of a sunlit vine,
On the banks of the golden Rhine,
Slowly ripening pure and fine,
Sweet divine,
Lover's wine.
Lift your voices till the rafters ring,
Fill your glasses to the brim and sing :

Refrain.

Tokay !

The golden sunshine of a summer
day,

Tokay !

Will bear the burden of your cares
away.

Here's to the love in you,

The hate in you,

Desire in you.

OFFICERS : Wine of the sun that waft you along,
Lifting you high on the wings of a song.

CAPTAIN A. : Dreams in you,
The flame in you,
The fire in you,
Tokay—Tokay.

OFFICERS : So while forgetfulness we borrow,
Never minding what to-morrow has to
say,

CAPTAIN A. : Tokay !

ALL : The only call we all obey,
Tokay—Tokay—Tokay !

Some go off to the bar, others seat themselves at tables and order wine. SARI and MANON come in and sit at a table below the balcony to the right. SARI is simply dressed in white. MANON is very gay in scarlet sequins.

SARI : I'm so tired.

MANON : Well, for heaven's sake don't look as if you were.

SARI : I'm sick of pretending.

MANON : So am I, but it's no use worrying about that. The whole business is pretending. Life's pretending.

SARI : That hateful Captain August—he smiled at me in the bar—an odious smile.

MANON : I hope you smiled back.

SARI : I certainly did not.

MANON : Well, that was very foolish of you—there's nothing so alluring to that type of man as snowy chastity.

SARI : How can you, Manon. (*She smiles.*) I'm so miserable really, it's horrid of you to laugh at me.

MANON : That's better—you're smiling yourself how.

LIEUTENANT TRANISCH *enters from the bar, comes to their table and bows to MANON.*

TRANISCH : Mademoiselle la Crevette.

MANON : Yes ?

TRANISCH : We have never spoken before, but I wish to say you are an admirable artiste—you sing like an angel.

MANON (*laughing very loudly*) : You Viennese are so gallant. I sing like a frog.

TRANISCH : Will you come to the bar and take a drink with me ?

MANON : What is this now—what does this mean ? Is it the birth of a romance ? I feel so flattered.

TRANISCH (*slightly embarrassed*) : Mademoiselle—I——

MANON : Never mind, Lieutenant, I am not deceived—you think I sing well, that is very kind—now tell me—cards on the table—to which of the more attractive women here do you want me to introduce you ?

TRANISCH : Really—you misunderstand me—I——

MANON : Come now—tell me—I have no sensibilities.

TRANISCH : There is a small blonde lady like a kitten in yellow—I will admit to you frankly—she enthralled me strangely.

MANON : That would be Gussi. (*She rises.*) Excuse me for a moment, Sari.

SARI : Of course.

TRANISCH (*clicking his heels and bowing to SARI*) : Fraulein.

MANON : Come along—but let me warn you—Gussi is a collector.

TRANISCH : Collector ?

MANON : Yes, of antiques—very enthusiastic—old jewellery for preference. If your acquaintance ripens, let me advise you when walking to keep to the more modern thoroughfares. (*She looks at SARI smilingly.*) Heigho—if love were all !

She and TRANISCH go off to the bar. CAPTAIN AUGUST enters and comes to SARI's table, but as he does so CARL sees him and comes down from the orchestra.

CAPTAIN A. (*bowing*) : Madame——

CARL : Sari, I want to talk to you. You remember the second movement in the concerto I was scoring yesterday, I have had the most magnificent idea—instead of using strings alone, I shall strengthen it with the zimbale just towards the end where it goes—tum tum tum tum—— (*He hums.*)

SARI : Yes, I know—*what* a good idea. (*She also hums*) Tum tum—tum tum tum——

They both hum together, and finally CAPTAIN AUGUST, finding himself completely ignored, turns on his heel and marches back into the bar.

(*Half laughing*) Oh, Carl—that was wonderful of you.

CARL : I was watching—I'm always watching to see that no harm comes to you.

SARI : I hate him so—he won't leave me alone—he embarrasses me.

CARL : Cheer up, my dearest.

SARI : I'll try. (*She smiles.*) Oh, Carl, there's something so heavy weighing down on my heart—I felt it this morning, and it's there again now.

CARL (*looking at her*) : You're very strange to-night—you've been strange all day—eager and tense like a frightened child. Is there anything the matter really ?

SARI : Yes—no—I don't know. I feel as though fate were too strong for us, as though our love for one another and our happiness together was making the gods angry. I feel suddenly insecure.

CARL : We'll go away, then, to-morrow.

SARI : Carl !

CARL : We have a little money saved anyhow. I hate Schlick and this place as much as you do really. To-night is the end of it. We'll go to Frankfort. Heinrich is there, he'll help us.

SARI : To-night is the end of it.

CARL : You remember Heinrich—with the long brown beard—you laughed at him.

SARI : Yes, he was funny, but I liked him.

CARL : Do you feel happier now ?

SARI : Oh yes, much, much happier.

CARL : So do I—we'll be free again—independent—I must get back. Au revoir, my dear love.

SARI : Au revoir.

She kisses her hand to him and goes off. GUSSI and LIEUTENANT TRANISCH come on, followed by HANSI and FREDa, who are giggling.

GUSSI : Louis Quinze—of course it was only paste, but definitely Louis Quinze.

TRANISCH : How interesting.

GUSSI : I'll show it to you to-morrow—we can drive there after luncheon.

TRANISCH : We haven't had supper yet.

GUSSI : No, but we will—we'll sit here—I shall have to dance in a minute—Fritz—Hans——

She sits down with TRANISCH at a small table and calls the WAITERS. FREDa and HANSI sit down also,

but on the opposite side of the stage, at the same table at which CARL and SARI played the preceding scene.

HANSI : I'll tell you one thing here and now, whatever Gussi is talking about is *not* paste.

FREDA : I doubt if it's even Louis Quinze.

SARI comes in.

HANSI : Here comes the snow queen.

FREDA : Hullo, Sari.

SARI : Hullo.

HANSI : Any offers to-night ?

FREDA : Don't tease her, Hansi—she's in love.

SARI (*smiling*) : No, no offers so far.

HANSI : Do you want a drink ?

SARI : Yes—I'd love one.

HANSI : Fritz——

She calls the waiter and orders wine.

FREDA : That's pretty, that dress—is it new ?

SARI : Yes. I made it myself from a pattern.

FREDA : It sags a little bit behind—here—look—give me a pin, Hansi.

HANSI : You can have this brooch for the time being, but give it back, it's not valuable, but lucky.

She gives SARI a brooch. SARI stands up while

FREDA fixes the brooch on to the dress. CAPTAIN

AUGUST comes in and bows ironically to SARI.

CAPTAIN A. : Will you honour me with this dance, please ?

SARI (*jumping slightly*) : Oh—no, I'm sorry—I'm engaged.

CAPTAIN A. : I fear that is not strictly true.

FREDA : I'll dance with you, if you like.

CAPTAIN A. : Please do not think me impolite, but I have set my heart on dancing with Fraulein Sari.

SARI: Forgive me, Captain, but it's quite impossible.

CAPTAIN A.: We shall see. (*He bows abruptly and walks across the stage to where SCHLICK is standing talking to two other officers. He is obviously very angry. He speaks to SCHLICK swiftly and angrily.*)

SARI: I hate him—he's always tormenting me.

FREDA: You're unwise, my dear—it's best to humour them a little.

SARI: I've tried—I've danced with him, but he presses me too close and whispers horrible things to me.

HANSI: He's very rich and, I believe, generous.

SARI: Yes, but that doesn't interest me.

HANSI (*wistfully*): There's no doubt about it—love is very bad for business.

SCHLICK *comes to their table.*

SCHLICK: Sari—

SARI: Yes, Herr Schlick.

SCHLICK: You are engaged and paid by me as a dancing partner for my clients, are you not?

SARI: Yes.

SCHLICK: I have received several complaints from Captain August Lutte—he says you persistently refuse to dance with him.

SARI: He takes advantage of my position.

SCHLICK: It would be better if you realised once and for all that you have no position—after to-night you may consider your engagement at an end.

SARI (*with spirit*): It is at an end anyhow—my husband and I are leaving Vienna to-morrow.

SCHLICK: Oho—I see. Well, I should like to remind you that you both have a week's salary owing to you, and unless you dance willingly and agreeably

with Captain August or any other of the officers when they ask you to, neither you nor your husband will receive a penny of your salary—I run my café on business lines, you understand.

SARI: But, Herr Schlick, that is unfair—my behaviour has nothing to do with my husband.

SCHLICK: That is enough. I am sick to death of your stupid mincing airs and graces—unless you behave yourself to-night, you will both leave to-morrow without your money, and be damned to you!

He leaves SARI, who sinks miserably into her chair.

HANSI and FREDa try to comfort her and give her some wine. SCHLICK advances to the middle of the floor to announce the commencement of the entertainment.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I crave your kind attention for the most superb musical entertainment ever offered in Vienna.

Everyone applauds.

Thank you. Thank you. My first number will be my six magnificent dancing girls—trained exclusively in the finest ballet schools in the world. Lise, Trude, Fritz, Toni, Greta and Elsa.

SIX GIRLS rise from their various tables and make a line in the middle of the floor. There is a lot of applause. CARL strikes up their music and they dance, after which they return to their tables amid cheers. SCHLICK again takes the floor.

Gentlemen—Ladies and Gentlemen—I beg attention for my favourite, your favourite, the world's favourite star—Manon la Crevette.

He steps aside and MANON comes running on. She is greeted with vociferous applause. She sings a very saucy French song : " Bonne Nuit, Merci ! " interspersed with a good deal of back-chat and ogling.

"BONNE NUIT, MERCI !"

MANON : Lorsque j'étais petite fille
En marchant parmi les prés
J'entendit la voix d'ma tante
Qui murmura à côté,
'N'oublie pas la politesse
Lorsque viendra un amant
Car tout la bonheur réside là dedans.'

Refrain.

C'est pourquoi dans mes affaires,
Soit de cœur ou soit d'esprit,
C'est pourquoi je tâche de plaire
Toute la foule de mes amis,
Soit qu'ils m'offrent pied-à-terre
Ou me montre une bonne affaire
J'leurs reponds, 'Vas-y. Bonne Nuit,
Merci !'

Lorsque je suis v'nue à Paris
J'étais sage de nature,
Mais que faire dans la vie
Etant jeune pour rester pur !
Quand ma politesse m'obligea
Lorsqu'je suivait par hasard
Une aventure dans les boites des boulevards.

Refrain.

Et j'ai rencontré en ville
Un monsieur bien comme il faut,
Il m'a dit, ' ma petite fille,
Veux-tu faire un p'tit do-do ?'
Lorsqu' j'arrive chez lui toute suite
I'me dit ' Deshabilles-toi vite !'
J'me suis dis ' Vas'y. Bonne Nuit,
Merci !'

As encore she sings a waltz song in which everybody joins.

WALTZ SONG.

'Tis time that we were parted,
You and I,
However broken-hearted,
'Tis good-bye !
Although our love has ended
And darkness has descended,
I call to you with one last cry :

Refrain.

Kiss me
Before you go away !
Miss me
Through every night and day.
Though clouds are grey above you,
You'll hear me say I love you !
Kiss me
Before you go away !

Parmi les chansons tristes
De l'amour,
Joies et chagrins existent
Tour à tour,
Et presque avec contrainte
On risque la douce étreinte
Qui nous sépare enfin toujours.

Refrain.

Je t'aime,
Tes baisers m'ont grisés
Même
A l'heure de t'en aller,
La volupté troublante
Brise mes lèvres brûlantes,
Je t'aime,
A l'heure de t'en aller.

At the end of this CARL strikes up another waltz and everybody begins to dance. SCHLICK comes over to SARI's table and stands behind it. After a moment CAPTAIN AUGUST approaches and bows.

CAPTAIN A. : Fraulein Sari has perhaps by now forgotten her other engagement.

SARI (*rising agitatedly*) : I—please—I——

SCHLICK : You are quite right, Captain, she has forgotten.

SARI : Captain August—I am very tired—will you please forgive me just this once ?

CAPTAIN A. : One dance, please.

SCHLICK : I think you would be well advised to grant Captain August's request.

SARI (*pulling herself together*): Certainly, Captain, I shall be charmed.

She gives one despairing look at CARL on the dais—he is watching anxiously—then she surrenders herself to the CAPTAIN'S arms and they begin to waltz. CARL watches all the time. As the dance progresses CAPTAIN AUGUST is obviously becoming more and more aggressively amorous. CARL, with obvious agitation, perceptibly quickens the tempo of the music. Finally the CAPTAIN waltzes SARI into the centre of the floor—stops dead, tightens his arms round her and kisses her on the mouth passionately, bending her right back as he does so. She gives one cry, CARL stops the music dead with a crash and leaps over the railing of the dais on to the middle of the floor. He drags SARI away from CAPTAIN AUGUST, then, springing at him, strikes him in the face. Immediately the buzz of excitement dies down into dead silence.

CARL (*wildly*): Swine—filthy, ill-mannered drunken swine!

SARI (*in a whisper*): Carl!

MANON (*rushing forward*): Carl—don't be a fool.

CAPTAIN AUGUST *gives an unpleasant laugh and draws his sword.*

CAPTAIN A.: Tranisch—look after our foolhardy young friend here, will you?

TRANISCH: Not now—not now—wait.

CAPTAIN A.: I regret—I cannot wait.

TRANISCH *draws his sword and hands it to CARL—*
MANON *clutches his arm.*

CARL : Stand back, Manon—look after Sari—please.

The CAPTAIN attacks him and they fight a brief duel, the crowd making a large ring round them. Suddenly CAPTAIN AUGUST knocks CARL's sword from his hand and runs him through. There is a general scream and everyone crowds forward. SARI silently and madly fights through the crowd and sinks to the ground, taking CARL in her arms. TRANISCH motions the crowd back. There is silence except for MANON, who is crying loudly and hopelessly.

SARI (*softly—she is dry-eyed*) : I'll love you always—always—do you hear ?

CARL (*weakly*) : Sari—Sari—my sweet, sweet Sari——

His head falls back in her lap, and she kneels there staring before her dazed and hopeless as the curtain falls.

ACT III

SCENE I

CHARACTERS

MADAME SARI LINDEN
THE MARQUIS OF SHAYNE
LADY JAMES (HARRIET)
MRS. PROUTIE (GLORIA)
MRS. BETHEL (EFFIE)
LADY SORREL (HONOR)
MRS. VALE (JANE)
THE DUCHESS OF TENTERDEN (VICTORIA)
LORD JAMES
MR. PROUTIE
MR. BETHEL
LORD SORREL
MR. VALE
THE DUKE OF TENTERDEN
THE HON. HUGH DEVON
MRS. DEVON
VERNON CRAFT
CEDRIC BALLANTYNE
BERTRAM SELICK
LORD HENRY JADE
ACCOMPANIST (to MADAME LINDEN)
BUTLER
GUESTS, ETC.

The scene is LORD SHAYNE'S house in London.

The Year is 1895.

ACT III

SCENE I

It is the drawing room of the MARQUIS OF SHAYNE's house in London. Fifteen years have passed since Act II, and it is now 1895. When the curtain rises, LORD SHAYNE, a distinguished old man, is standing a little to the right receiving his guests, who are announced by the BUTLER. LADY JAMES (HARRIET) and MRS. PRONTIE (GLORIA) are announced with their husbands, likewise MRS. BETHEL (EFFIE), LADY SORREL (HONOR), MRS. VALE (JANE), and lastly the DUCHESS OF TENTERDEN (VICTORIA). They are all by now smart middle-aged society matrons. Their entrance and LORD SHAYNE's reception of them is all part of the opening chorus.

OPENING CHORUS.

ALL : Tarara boom-de-ay,
 Tarara boom-de-ay,
We are the most effectual,
 Intellectual
Movement of the day.
Our moral standards sway
 Like Mrs. Tanqueray,
And we are theoretically
 Most æsthetically
 Eager to display

The fact that we're aggressively
And excessively
Anxious to destroy
All the snobbery
And hob-nobbery
Of the hoi-polloi.
Tarara boom-de-ay.

It's mental washing day,
And come what may
We'll scrub until the nation's morals
shrink away.

Tarara boom-de-ay !

EXQUISITES : Though we are languid in appearance,

We're in the vanguard.
We feel we can guard
The cause of Art.

We shall ignore all interference,
For our complacency
With this renaissance
Is frightfully smart.

Please do not think us unrelenting,
Our charming frolic
With the symbolic
Is meek and mild.

We merely spend our time preventing
Some earnest stripling
From liking Kipling
Instead of Wilde.

Now that we find the dreary nineteenth
century is closing,

We mean to start the twentieth in
ecstasies of posing.

ALL: Tarara boom-de-ay,
 It's mental washing day,
 And come what may
 We'll scrub until the tiresome bour-
 geois shrink away.
 Tarara boom-de-ay!

Which is concluded by a SEXTETTE by HARRIET, GLORIA, HONOR, JANE, EFFIE and VICTORIA. Everyone else retires into the supper room, leaving them on the stage.

“ALAS THE TIME IS PAST.”

Alas, the time is past when we
 Could frolic with impunity.
 Secure in our virginity,
 We sometimes look aghast
 Adown the lanes of memory,
 Alas, the time is past.
Ah, then the world was at our feet,
When we were sweet-and-twenty,
We never guessed that what we'd got,
 Tho' not a lot—was plenty.
 We gaily sought some Abelard
 To cherish, guard and own us,
But all we know of storm and strife
 Our married life—has shown us.
Alas, the time is past when we
 Could frolic with impunity.
 Secure in our virginity,
 We sometimes look aghast
 Adown the lanes of memory.
 Alas, the time is past.

Alack-a-day me—alack-a-day me !
Ah, then the world was at our feet,
Alas, the time is past.

HARRIET : What have you done to your hair, Effie—it strikes me as peculiar.

EFFIE : Nothing in particular.

GLORIA : I'm afraid you're becoming a little pernickety, Harriet ; you must guard against it.

HONOR : Where's your late husband, Victoria ?

VICTORIA : Later than ever, my dear—he's at Boodles, I expect.

JANE : Talking too much.

HARRIET : And drinking much too much.

VICTORIA : You can't upset me by saying that, Harriet dear. I find alcohol one of the greatest comforts of matrimony !

HONOR : Victoria !

VICTORIA : In a husband, I mean—it leaves one free for one's charities.

JANE : A little too free sometimes, my pet.

HARRIET : Who is this woman ?

EFFIE : Which woman ?

HARRIET : The one we've been invited to meet.

VICTORIA : Some strange Hungarian singer—probably very glittering and rather stout.

HONOR : Oh, I shouldn't think so—Lord Shayne has been pursuing her for ages from capital to capital.

HARRIET : Central Europe is far too musical, there can be no two opinions about that.

JANE : I hear she's very beautiful.

LORD SHAYNE *has entered unobserved from the supper room.*

LORD S. : She is——

VICTORIA : Good heavens, how you made me jump !

LORD S. : She is one of the few really beautiful people in the world.

HARRIET : How very disconcerting !

HONOR : Do you think we shall like that ?

LORD S. : I shall be very interested to see the effect she has on you—you are all—if I may say so—so very representative.

VICTORIA : Of what, dear Lord Shayne ?

LORD S. : Shall we say “ *fin de siècle* ” ?

HARRIET : I was afraid somebody would say that before the evening was over.

The BUTLER announces the HON. HUGH DEVON and MRS. DEVON. LORD SHAYNE moves over to greet them. HUGH has developed along the exact lines that one would have expected ; he has become a good deal more pompous with the years, and has a tremendously diplomatic manner. His wife is fat and vague.

VICTORIA : Margaret dear, how are you ?

MRS. D. : Shattered, completely shattered ! Our cabby was raving mad. He kept saying the oddest things to his horse, at least I hope they were to his horse. I pretended not to understand, one has to think of prestige——

LORD S. : I hear you're going to Vienna.

HUGH : Yes, next week, thank God ! I believe Mullins has been making a fearful hash of everything.

MRS. D. : Isn't it exciting ! I was so afraid we were going to be sent to Riga or Christiania or somewhere draughty like that.

HARRIET : Hugh generally gets what he wants.

MRS. D. : As it is, I don't know what I shall do with the children. I can't help feeling that Eva is the wrong age for Vienna.

LORD S. : No one is the wrong age for Vienna—it's a city of enchantment—magnificent.

HUGH : I'm told the plumbing is appalling.

VICTORIA : Lord Shayne has fallen in love again—haven't you, my dear ?

LORD S. : I am always in love with beauty.

HUGH : Admirably put, Shayne. I quite agree with you.

JANE : We're all on tenterhooks to see Madame Linden—she's due at any moment.

MRS. D. : What are tenterhooks, I never know.

The BUTLER throws open the doors and announces MADAME SARI LINDEN. SARAH enters, exquisitely gowned and radiantly beautiful, carrying herself with tremendous poise ; her jewels are superb, and the years have invested her with a certain air of decision which is almost metallic as compared with the tremulous diffidence of her youth. LORD SHAYNE goes forward and kisses her hand.

LORD S. : My dear, how enchanting to see you again. (*He turns with a smile*) I think you know everyone here.

HARRIET : Good heavens, Sarah !

VICTORIA (*astounded*) : Sarah !

EFFIE : It can't be—it can't be——

She rushes up and kisses her. There is a babel of surprised and excited conversation. HUGH stands a little apart, looking a trifle embarrassed.

HONOR : We heard that you had died, ages and ages ago.

SARI : I did die. Fifteen years ago to be exact. Things happened and I couldn't come back. I didn't want to come back, so I thought I'd better die, vaguely and obscurely. It was the only thing to do—it sort of rounded everything off so satisfactorily.

JANE : It's unbelievable, Sarah, dear Sarah.

SARI : Please don't be quite so pleased to see me. It makes me feel ashamed, particularly with Hugh standing there, looking so stern. How do you do, Hugh?

HUGH : I'm delighted to see you again. Margaret, I want you to meet Sarah—Sarah——? (*He looks questioningly at her.*)

SARI : Linden—don't say you've forgotten Carl Linden, the man I eloped with, practically under your nose, Hugh?

HUGH : I remember perfectly—how is he?

SARI : He's dead—I'm so glad to meet you, Mrs. Devon. I do hope Hugh is a charming husband and not too embittered—I treated him abominably, you know.

MRS. D. (*shaking hands with her*) : It's all so very surprising—very, very surprising—Hugh told me the whole story, when he heard of your death in Prague or somewhere. He was dreadfully upset, weren't you, Hugh?

HUGH : Yes, indeed, I was.

SARI (*smiling and tapping him lightly with her fan*) : Dear Hugh, never mind—everything always turns out for the best, doesn't it? At least, almost everything.

LORD S. : Won't you have a little supper—Sari?

HONOR : " Sari "—it does sound pretty, doesn't it—
" Sari."

SARI : Only a very little, if you want me to sing for you.

They all go into the supper room, chattering and laughing, while the ORCHESTRA very softly and lightly plays a reprise of the "Blindman's Buff Finale" in Act I. When the supper room doors close behind them, the others doors open and four over-exquisitely dressed young men enter. They all wear in their immaculate buttonholes green carnations. VERNON CRAFT, a poet, CEDRIC BALLANTYNE, a painter, LORD HENRY JADE, a dilettante, and BERTRAM SELICK, a playwright.

BERTIE : It's entirely Vernon's fault that we are so entrancingly late.

VERNON : My silk socks were two poems this evening and they refused to scan.

HENRY : It's going to be inexpressibly dreary, I can feel it in my bones.

CEDRIC : Don't be absurd, Henry, your whole charm lies in the fact that you have no bones.

They sing a quartette : " We all Wore a Green Carnation."

" WE ALL WORE A GREEN CARNATION."

Blasé boys are we,
Exquisitely free
From the dreary and quite absurd
Moral views of the common herd.

We like porphyry bowls,
Chandeliers and stoles,
We're most spirited,
Carefully filleted "souls."

Refrain.

Pretty boys, witty boys, too, too, too
 Lazy to fight stagnation,
Haughty boys, naughty boys, all we do
 Is to pursue sensation.
 The portals of society
 Are always opened wide,
The world our eccentricity condones,
 A note of quaint variety
 We're certain to provide.
We dress in very decorative tones.
Faded boys, jaded boys, womankind's
 Gift to a bulldog nation,
In order to distinguish us from less enlightened
 minds,
 We all wear a green carnation.

We believe in Art,
 Though we're poles apart
From the fools who are thrilled by Greuze.
We like Beardsley and Green Chartreuse.
 Women say we're too
 Bored to bill and coo,
 We smile wearily,
 It's so drearily true !

Refrain.

Pretty boys, witty boys, you may sneer
At our disintegration,
Haughty boys, naughty boys, dear, dear, dear !
Swooning with affectation.
Our figures sleek and willowy,
Our lips incarnadine,
May worry the majority a bit.
But matrons rich and billowy,
Invite us out to dine,
And revel in our phosphorescent wit.
Faded boys, jaded boys, come what may,
Art is our inspiration,
And as we the reason for the ' Nineties ' being gay,
We all wear a green carnation.

Refrain.

Pretty boys, witty boys, yearning for
Permanent adulation,
Haughty boys, naughty boys, every pore
Bursting with self-inflation,
We feel we're rather Grecian,
As our manners indicate,
Our sense of moral values isn't strong.
For ultimate completion
We shall really have to wait
Until the Day of Judgment comes along.
Faded boys, jaded boys, each one craves
Some sort of soul salvation,
But when we rise reluctantly but gracefully from
our graves,
We'll all wear a green carnation.

They go off. LORD SHAYNE and SARI come in from the supper room.

LORD S. : I want to talk to you.

SARI : I know.

LORD S. : You can guess what I am going to say ?

SARI : Yes, I think so.

LORD S. : I love you.

SARI (*smiling*) : I was right.

LORD S. : Will you honour me by becoming my wife ? You've now refused me in practically every capital in Europe—London is the last on the list.

SARI : Why should London prove the exception ?

LORD S. : It's home.

SARI (*sighing*) : Yes—I suppose it is.

LORD S. : It has charm, London—a very peaceful charm, particularly for anyone who is tired like you. You can drive in the Park in the Spring and look at the crocuses.

SARI : Please don't talk of Spring.

LORD S. : Then there's the Autumn, when the leaves fall in the Square, and you can sit on a rickety iron chair and watch the children searching for horse chestnuts.

SARI (*wistfully*) : Whose children ?

LORD S. : Just anybody's.

SARI : The fogs come in November.

LORD S. : Fogs can be delightful.

SARI : Can they ? (*She smiles.*)

LORD S. : Particularly when you're warm and snug by a crackly fire drinking tea, while from the yellow gloom outside the trees look in at you like ghosts.

SARI : I don't like tea or ghosts.

LORD S. : You're very hard to please.

SARI : How do you know I'm tired ?

LORD S. : By your voice, and your eyes.

SARI : I'm afraid I don't love you—actually ! I think you're kind and understanding and gay and very dear, but you know I've only really loved one man all my life. I know it's tiresome to be so faithful, particularly to a mere memory, but there it is.

LORD S. : I think perhaps I could make you happy—anyhow happier.

SARI : May I think it over a little ? I'll let you know a little later, by the songs I sing——

The supper room doors open and everyone comes noisily into the room.

VICTORIA : Sarah—aren't you going to sing soon ?

HONOR : Do you remember our singing lessons at Madame Claire's before you met Carl Linden—I mean—Oh dear——

SARI (*smiling*) : I remember ! I do hope my voice has improved since then.

LORD S. : Silence, please ! Madame Sari Linden will sing us some of Carl Linden's enchanting songs, the songs she has made so famous.

Everyone applauds and arranges themselves comfortably.

SARI : Where is my accompanist, is he here ?

A foreign-looking YOUNG MAN detaches himself from the crowd.

YOUNG MAN : Here I am.

SARI : What shall we start with ?

YOUNG MAN : " The River Song " ?

SARI : No, that's too difficult to begin with.

YOUNG MAN : " Zigeuner ? "

SARI : That will do. Ladies and Gentlemen, this song needs a slight preface. My husband wrote it

when he was only sixteen. He visited Germany for the first time and sailed down the Rhine past forests and castles and gipsy encampments, and they fired his imagination so much that he wrote this song of a lovely flaxen-haired German Princess who fell in love with a Zigeuner gipsy.

The YOUNG MAN starts the introduction and SARI takes her stand by the piano. LORD SHAYNE stands pensively near her, gazing at her. She sings "Zigeuner."

"ZIGEUNER."

Once upon a time
Many years ago,
Lived a fair Princess,
Hating to confess
Loneliness was torturing her so.
Then a gipsy came,
Called to her by name.
Woo'd her with a song,
Sensuous and strong,
All the summer long ;
Her passion seemed to tremble like a living flame.

Is taken up after the first verse by the ORCHESTRA.

Bid my weeping cease,
Melody that brings
Merciful release,
Promises of peace ;
Through the gentle throbbing of the strings.

Music of the plain,
Music of the wild,
Come to me again,
Hear me not in vain,
Soothe a heart in pain,
And let me to my happiness be reconciled.

Refrain.

Play to me beneath the summer moon,
Zigeuner !—Zigeuner !—Zigeuner !
All I ask of life is just to listen
To the songs that you sing,
My spirit like a bird on the wing
Your melodies adoring—soaring,
Call to me with some barbaric tune,
Zigeuner !—Zigeuner !—Zigeuner !
Now you hold me in your power,
Play to me for just an hour,
Zigeuner !

At the end of it everyone applauds. She silences them by raising her hand.

This is a very simple, sentimental little song. I do hope you won't laugh at it—it means a very great deal to me.

She unpins a bunch of white violets from her waist and throws them to LORD SHAYNE. Then she begins to sing the refrain of "I'll See You Again."

Reprise.

I'll see you again,
I live each moment through again.
Time has lain heavy between,
But what has been

Can leave me never ;
Your dear memory
Throughout my life has guided me.
Though my world has gone awry,
Though the years my tears may dry,
I shall love you till I die,
Good-bye !

At the end the lights dim and the ORCHESTRA crashes out the melody. When the lights go up again, it is the present day, the same as Act I, Scene I, and she is an old woman singing to a lot of young people sprawling on the floor. When she finishes singing, DOLLY CHAMBERLAIN springs to her feet.

DOLLY : It is the most thrilling, divine, marvellous thing I've ever heard—Vincent, I'm mad about you—d'you hear—I love you.

She flings herself into his arms, he gently and rather absently disengages himself.

VINCENT : What a melody—my God, what a melody !

He goes to the piano and begins to play "I'll See You Again," softly as a fox-trot. The rest of the band join in and then the ORCHESTRA. Everyone gets up "hey-beying" and Charlestoneing and finally, led by DOLLY, they all go jaxxing out through the double doors, followed by VINCENT and the members of the dance band. LADY SHAYNE is left alone, standing quite still. Suddenly she begins to laugh, a strange, cracked, contemptuous laugh ; she rises to her feet, and then, suddenly holding out her arms wide, she sings :

SARI : Though my world has gone awry,
Though the end is drawing nigh,
I shall love you till I die,
Good-bye !

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

“BITTER SWEET” was first performed at His Majesty’s Theatre on July 18, 1929, with the following as the principal cast :

THE MARCHIONESS OF SHAYNE	PEGGY WOOD
DOLLY CHAMBERLAIN	DOROTHY BOYD
LORD HENRY JEKYLL	WILLIAM HARN
VINCENT HOWARD	BILLY MILTON
SARAH MILLICK	PEGGY WOOD
CARL LINDEN	GEORGE METAXA
MRS. MILLICK	ELAINE INESCOURT
HUGH DEVON	ROBERT NEWTON
VICTORIA	JOSIE FEARON
HARRIET	MAIE DRAGE
GLORIA	ROSE HIGNELL
HONOR	ISLA BEVAN
JANE	EILEEN CAREY
EFFIE	MARY POUNDS
LOTTE	MILLIE SIM
FREDA	BETTY HUNTLEY WRIGHT
HANSI	MARJORIE ROGERS
GUSSI	NORAH HOWARD
MANON (LA CREVETTE)	IVY ST. HELIER
CAPTAIN AUGUST LUTTE	AUSTIN TREVOR
LIEUTENANT TRANISCH	ARTHUR ALEXANDER
HERR SCHLICK	CLIFFORD HEATHERLEY

The play produced by NOEL COWARD.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
THE LONDON AND NORWICH PRESS, LIMITED
ST. GILES WORKS, NORWICH



P7-ADU-602